

67846
A **Madversion**

ON THE

Unchristian Conduct

OF AN

INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY,

Towards one of their Members.

In a Controversy with Reference to the Doctrine
of the Trinity, in three Letters.

To which is added, a **POSTSCRIPT.**

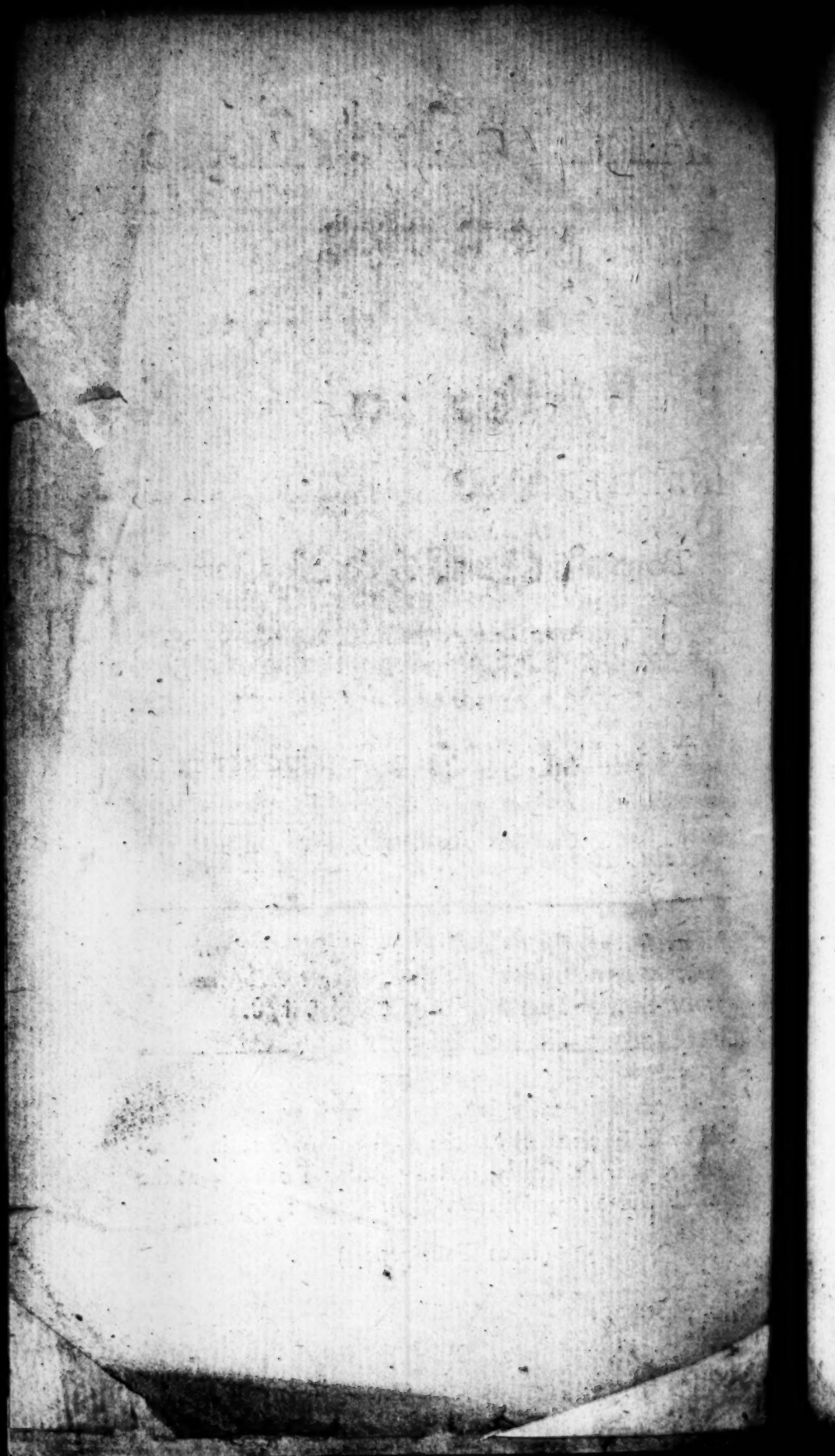
By **RICHARD SMART.**

*Beware, lest any Spoil you through Philosophy and vain De-
ceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of
the World, and not after Christ, Colos. ii. 8.*

L O N D O N.

Sold by C. RICHARDS, at the Bible and Crown, in Cornhill
Lane, near St. Pauls; and by J. B. BARNES, at the
Bible and Dove, in Pall-mall, 1749.

(Price 1s. 6d.)



T H E
P R E F A C E.

SO long as Bigotry and Party Zeal triumph in the World, and Prejudice [unhappily] influences the Minds of Men, the Person who dissents in his Judgment from the Multitude; must never expect to be treated with Candour and Charity. While the Man that embraces the Faith of the Popular, and sits down contented with the Principles of Education, is revered and applauded, the Person whose Mind is sincerely inquisitive after Truth, is stigmatized with the infamous Characters of Infidel and Apostate.

As Scripture is the only Standard of Truth, by which we are to regulate our Sentiments, and conform our Faith; I apprehend it to be no Disgrace to disclaim those Tenets which are not expressed there, or can by just and natural Consequences be deduced from them.

With Reference to the Opinions of Men, I am not obliged to believe what I cannot comprehend, and if the Doctrines they advance appear to me inconsistent with a Divine Revelation, and en-

tirely reverse to the Dictates of Reason; I esteem it no Error to disregard and reject them as such.

As to the following Lines, they are not wrote out of Pride or Revenge, they are neither design'd to spread Confusion or gain Profelytes; but to vindicate myself from the false Aspersions which have been maliciously cast on my Sentiments, and convince the judicious and impartial Part of Mankind that they are quite opposite to their Assertions.

What Reception my Account will meet with from the Publick, I am not concerned in the least; my Notions were not imbibed by Education, nor are they bias'd by Prejudice, but are the Result of a serious Enquiry into the genuine Meaning of the sacred Pages; and the secret Peace which arises from this Reflection, will (I am persuaded) be sufficient to support me under all the Clamour and Calumny of slandering and ill-natured Tongues.

To conclude, nothing could have urged the Publication of these Affairs, but the ungenerous Treatment I have met with from that Community, and the Obligation I think myself under to inform the World Simon Magus bears no relation to me.

Animad-

Animadversions

ON THE

Unchristian Conduct

OF AN

Independent Community, &c.

LETTER I.

BRETHREN,

AT your Request I have drawn up what I may justly call my Creed, of the Doctrine of the Divine and Mediatorial Beings, or God, and Christ; for as to the Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons, (or Gods, which is one and the same Thing with me) I find upon a serious Enquiry Scripture knows nothing of.

I firm-

I firmly believe that there is one God, and but one, and when I affirm in Scripture Language, that there is but one God, I would be understood to mean that there is but only one; First, eternal, existent, one necessary, independent Being, one infinite conscious Mind, intelligent Agent, or Person, the greatest, wisest, and best, the one unchangeable God, the Creator of all Things, the Sovereign Proprietor, and Disposer of all his Works, the righteous Governour and Judge of all his intellectual Creatures, and the supreme Object of all religious Adoration and Worship.

This one self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable Being, is such in Distinction from and Opposition to all other divine Equals. And as he is thus distinguish'd to us in Scripture, under this Character of God, so likewise is he represented to us under two other distinguishing Characters of Father and Spirit, not only to represent to us that he is our Father, as he is the common Parent of all Living; which is an undeniable Truth, but also in a spiritual Way, as it regards Christ and Believers, and so intimates both the Nearness of the Divine Being to them, and his tender Concern for them under that Character. Spirit; or Holy Ghost, is another distinguishing Character of the first self-existent Being, equally peculiar to him with those of God, and Father; for, says our Lord, God is a Spirit, tho' it cannot be denied, but that

that in Scripture, Spirit sometime signifies Power and Influence.

Evident it is beyond all Contradiction, that there is but one God, so it is as conspicuous from Scripture that there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus. This glorious Person, of whom I am now going to offer my Judgment, had a much earlier Existence I humbly conceive, than the popular are pleased to allow him: For I believe, (and am not ashamed to acknowledge it) that this glorious Person, who in Scripture is called the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God, the Word of God, and the like, before all Worlds was brought forth into Being, immediately into Union with God, and so became the Man of his (God's) Counsels, by whom he made all Things visible and invisible, this was that glorious Person who appear'd to the Old Testament Saints in the Form of a Man, and in the Fullness of Time according to Covenant Settlements, laid aside that Glory and Riches which he was invested with, left Heaven (for he came out from the Father) and came down into our World, and assumed that Body which was prepared for him; that so he might accomplish all the Designs of his Father, for tho' a Son yet learned he Obedience: He obeyed, suffered, and died, the Just for the Unjust, and brought in everlasting Righteousness, and made full Reconciliation for the Sins of the People.

But

But to prevent any Mistake here, I would further observe to you that our exalted Jesus, is not, nor is it possible he should be (as the *Socinians* falsely imagine) a mere Creature; for notwithstanding all the Vicissitudes and Changes our Lord went through, he still remained in the closest and strictest Union with God, that possible could be, his Father and he being one, not one and the same Thing as the *Arians* say, but one in Union, as he himself affirmed. I would further notice to you, that by God and Christ being one; I do not mean in the same Sense as the *Sabellians*, who make but one Person; for notwithstanding the Divine and Mediatorial Beings are in the strictest Union that can possibly be, so that God is manifested in the Flesh, and all the Fullness of the Godhead dwells in him Bodily, yet still subsist in two distinct Persons. * Now unto him that sits upon the Throne, and the Lamb be Glory for ever and ever Amen.

RICHARD SMART.

Deliver'd to one of the Messengers of the Church,
December 30, 1748.

*The following Lines are the Answer I
receiv'd from the Church.*

L E T T E R II.

S I R,

BY your Letter read to the Church, we with Grief and Sorrow perceive, that you are opposing a grand Fundamental Article of that Faith once deliver'd to the Saints; we mean that Foundation Truth, the Doctrine of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, which has been the Comfort and Delight of the Saints in every Age of the Church. Which Truth, tho' it has been much opposed, and that with great Fury and Rage by some, yet has always stood it's Ground as a firm Foundation for the Believer's Hope of eternal Salvation, while every Scheme invented against it, has shifted and appear'd in very different Forms.

The first Opposer of this Doctrine under the New Testament was *Simon Magus*, who after he was rejected by the Apostle *Peter*, gave it out that he himself was the supreme God, who appear'd in *Samaria* as the Father, in *Judea* as the Son, in other Nations as the

B

Holy

Holy Ghost. Never till this Time was the Term Holy Ghost apply'd to the Father : And as he had such an extravagant Conceit of himself, so he has laid the Foundation of every Error, which has disturb'd the Peace of the Church ever since ; which might be easily demonstrated would Time permit, or it might be gathered from the learned Dr. *Berriman's* Sermons at Lady *Moyer's* Lecture, and other Writers.

From this Monster of Iniquity the numerous Armies of the Opposers of this Doctrine have derived their Schemes ; 'till at last, they have settled for a while in these three following Names, (*viz.*) *Sabellians*, *Socinians* and *Arians*, all which have been professed Antagonists to this Truth, yet notwithstanding this Doctrine of the Trinity has not, cannot, nor ever will be overcome.

Tho' these three Armies, as Followers of their Leaders, have level'd their Artillery at this Divine Truth, it has been a Means of making it more conspicuous and precious to the Church of God. But grieved and sorry was the Church when your Letter was read, to find one, from whom they expected better Things, taking part with all three of the Armies of the Opposers of this Truth, so that while you deny you belong to any in particular, we could not forbear thinking you was something of every one ; because you declare there is but one Per-
son

son in the Divine Effence, which is *Sabellianism*, making Use of the Expression Holy Spirit, and applying it to the first existent Being as you phrase it, or Father, as we term it.

The Manner in which you have represented the Son of God, we can't think amounts to any more than making him a mere Creature; and by allowing his Personality, only to arise from his Humanity, and counting him Divine, because he is united to the Father, you still confirm us in our Opinion, that you imagine Christ is but a Creature, as the *Socinians* call him; you only differ from them as to the Time of Christ's Existence, and hereby fall in with the *Arians*, who say there was a Time when the Son was not, that he was created before all Worlds, and made out of nothing, like the created Angels, which being united to human Flesh, supply'd the Place of the human Soul. And your Representation we apprehend, refers to the Pre-existence of Christ's human Soul, to which you ascribe the same Things the *Arians* do, to what they call the Son of God, (*viz.*) that by him all Things visible and invisible were made.

To sum up the whole, you allow that there are two Persons, and these not of the same Substance, the one a material and the other an immaterial Being, so that neither *Sabellian*, *Socinian* or *Arian*, need or would much reject

(what you call your Creed) in these Particulars.

As therefore we believe these Errors are dangerous to the Peace of a Church of Christ, quite contrary to the whole of a divine Revelation, and destructive of the Comfort of poor Souls, we are satisfied, we have acted on Scripture Ground in what we have done, and can't forbear adding, that we shall soon think it our Duty to proceed further for your Good, except the great Head of the Church, out of his abundant Grace, bring you back from the Camp of the Enemies, into which by the grand Adversary, and the Corruption of your own Heart, you have been seduced; which will afford no small Pleasure to us, for nothing but Christ's Appointment, Love to him, his Church, and your Soul's Welfare, could ever engage us in so disagreeable a Work; to conclude, we refer you to the following Texts of Scripture, where you may see your Errors described, and the Rule for our Conduct determined, *Rom* xvi. 17. *1 Tim.* i. 19, 20. *1 John* ii. 22, 23. *2 Pet.* ii. 1. *Jude* 4. *Titus* iii. 10, 11. The Church agreed to send you this Answer, but came to a Resolution not to enter into any Dispute with you further about these Points.

Signed by Order
of the Church,
Feb. 12, 1748.

M. A———*s.*

J. S———*d.*

S. B———*n.*

L E T-

LETTER III.

GENTLEMEN,

I Presume that notwithstanding the Resolution you made not to enter into any Dispute with me further upon these Points; it should not be a reasonable Objection why I should not send you the following Lines, being some Remarks on the Letter I received from you, which I would recommend to your Consideration.

And in the first Place I would enquire, what Connection there is between the Sentiment I have advanced and that of *Simon Magus*; I am persuaded you will soon see, if you please to give yourselves the least Time to reflect on these Points, that they are as opposite to each other as Light and Darkneſs; the one has to do with a mere Creature, or rather a Madman, for who in his Senses would dare to assert himself to be the Supreme God, as this blasphemous Wretch did; and who in their Senses could credit his Assertions, seeing that he himself was but a poor mortal Man, and liable to the very same Infirmities as they themselves? Can we reasonably suppose this Blasphemer should so far influence any rational Being, as
to

to become his Profelyte? and if so, he could not be able to lay a Foundation for this or any other Doctrine whatever. Now as to the Doctrine I am contending for, it refers you to God, the first self-existent Being, the Creator of all Things, the Governor of universal Nature; and methinks your reciting this Piece of History, is a plain Demonstration how far your Christian Charity extends towards such as differ from you, even to level them with the most infamous and abandon'd Wretch you could find out.

You further observe, that while I deny to belong to any in particular, *viz.* *Sabellians*, *Socinians* and *Arians*, you could not forbear thinking I was something of every one: an excellent Thought indeed! And should it happen to be so what is that to the Purpose? If it is Truth, let me tell you, Names are nothing to me, but Things; now if there is any Truth contained under those Names, I think it my Duty to receive them, and esteem it no dishonour to acknowledge it should it be so; but it happens to the contrary, I am as far from any of those Tenets which you have named as yourselves; and perhaps it may not be a great Difficulty to prove that not only you, but the most orthodox Christian in the World may not only be something of those three Parties, but of all other Sects whatever, perhaps not excluding *Turks* and *Heathens*; And wonder

wonder that Men of so penetrating a Judgment as you undoubtedly are, should not have discovered the Weakness of such Thoughts as these.

As to the Doctrine in Debate, which you there call a grand fundamental Article of Faith, and assert that it has been the Comfort and Delight of the Saints in every Age of the Church, is what I think wants Proof: For if Scripture is the only Standard of Truth, and what it proposes as such, is to be the Object of the Believer's Faith, then it will naturally follow that such Principles which are not to be found there, but are repugnant to it, ought to be rejected as nothing else but the Inventions of Men, and not revealed by God in his Word, but are the Reverse to it; and as such I look upon the Point in Contest and reject it; and how any Doctrine that is not revealed by God in his Word, can yield Comfort and Delight to his People, except (an imaginary one) as you assert this doth, is such a Mystery as I must leave you to unfold.

If to advance in its Favour, the Opposition it has met with in the World, then every one has as grand an Argument for his Error as yourselves, and notwithstanding you are pleased to assert that it has stood its Ground, while other Schemes have shifted and appeared in very different Forms, it is as evident that this invented Scheme has shifted as often, and appeared

peared in as many different Forms, If not in more than any you seem to have your Eye upon.

But to proceed; you seem to intimate that to apply the Term Holy Ghost to the Father, or the first self-existent Being, took its Rise from *Simon Magus*, for you call him the first Opposer of the Trinity under the New Testament; which plainly intimates that there was some under the old Dispensation, which I should have thought myself obliged to you if you had named, or proved that they had any Notions of such a Doctrine. I will assure you that such a Piece of Knowledge would have been very acceptable; but supposing this to be no more than a Flourish, and that you knew of none; I go on and assure you, that it had not its Rise from *Simon Magus*, nor is it any cunning Artifice or Invention of Men, but from the sacred Pages it dates its Original, as plainly appears by our Lord's Discourse with the Woman of *Samaria*: The * true Worshipers, says our Lord, shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him, and then adds God is a Spirit. Here you see the Supreme God spoken of under the Character of Father, and has the Term Spirit (or Holy Ghost, which is all one) apply'd to him, without any Distinction of Per-

* John iv. 23, 24.

sons. So in the Case of *Ananias*, *Peter* said, *Ananias* * why hath Satan filled thy Heart to lie to the Holy Ghost; for thou hast not lied unto Men but unto God, unto God without any Limitation or Distinction; here you have the Term Holy Ghost applied to the Father, or the first self-existent Being in both Texts, in as plain Terms as Words can express it.

To tell me my Account of the Son of God, amounts to no more than making him a mere Creature, and that for no other Reason than because you apprehend, that there are some Things said of him which favour the *Socinian* Scheme; and wherein I differ from them to fall in with the *Arians*; this is merely trifling with me: I should have thought you should have consulted the sacred Pages, to have seen how far I agreed or differ'd from them, but not a Word of this, Scripture now seems to be quite laid aside.

However, I must again refer you to this Book, which is so much neglected by you in the present Dispute, where you will find the Account I have given you in my Letter, is no other than the Record which God hath given of his Son: I might mention Multitudes of Texts to prove the Pre-existence of Christ's human Soul, but I love Brevity, and therefore shall content myself with only the few following, which I think plainly evidence this Truth.

* *Acts* v. 3.

I am, * says Christ to his Disciples, come from the Father, and am come into the World, Again, I leave the World, and go to the Father, upon which his Disciples declared that they well understood him, that he did not now (whatever he had done before) speak Parables, as in the following Verses, † His Disciples said unto him, Lo now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Parables, by this we believe that thou comest forth from God. And in the next Chapter, we have Christ praying for a Glory he once had; his Words are these: And now O Father, ‡ glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the Glory I had with thee before the World was. To which I would add the Words of the Apostle *Paul* to the believing *Corinthians*, in order to excite their Liberality towards the poor Saints: || For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was Rich, yet for your Sakes he became Poor, that ye through his Poverty might become Rich. Now can we reasonably suppose, that any of those Texts are applicable to Christ as he is God, surely no, for as Christ is the eternal Jehovah, he could no more leave Heaven, than he could leave the Father; it is impossible that he should at any Time be so impoverish'd as to become extream Poor, nor

* *John* xvi. 28.
|| 2 *Cor.* viii. 9.

† xvi. 29, 30.

‡ xvii. 5.

yet be divested of the least Part of his Glory, for God is not liable to change, * I the Lord change not. Surely then without any Force on the Texts, they must refer to Christ as he is Man; and so you may plainly see the Truth I plead for contained in them, viz. that Christ existed in his human Soul, long before he came into our World, and thus he came out from the Father, laid aside his Glory, and became poor without any Injustice done those Texts.

You tell me you are confirmed in your Opinion, that I imagine Christ to be but a mere Creature, and that for these Reasons; first, because I allow his Personality only to arise from his Humanity; so I do, I freely confess; but had not God's Word directed me so to do, I should not have dared to have done it; but in Scripture we find these two great Personages frequently opposed to each other, I mean God and the Mediator; as in the following Scriptures: † For there is one God and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus. ‡ But unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all Things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him. § And this is Life eternal, to know thee

* Mal. iii. 6.

† 1 Tim. ii. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. viii. 6.

§ John xvii. 3.

the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent; * Now unto him that sits upon the Throne, and the Lamb. † Now unto God and the Lamb. In these and such like Places is God, or the whole Divine Essence opposed to the Man Christ; for it is not the divine, but the human Nature, which is called the Lamb that was Slain. Secondly, another Reason is, by accounting him Divine, because he is united to the Father, strange indeed? That you should accuse me of making Christ a mere Creature, because I assert that the whole Godhead, all that is God to be the Divinity of Christ; whereas you yourselves allow him to have but a third Part of Deity united to him, now if when he has the whole Godhead (as I have asserted agreeable to Scripture, which I shall attempt to prove) united to him, he still remains a Creature; what must he be with a third Part of it, supposing it were possible that Deity could be thus divided, that so Christ might have one Part out of three united to him, I shall leave you to judge? And shall now proceed to evidence this Truth from Scripture, viz. that the Godhead of the Father is the Godhead of the Son; Christ declares that the Father is in him, ‡ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in

* Rev. v. 13. † vii. 10. ‡ John xiv. 11.

me :- Again, * He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; † I and my Father are one ; you may plainly see that Christ knew no other Divinity dwelling in him, but his Father ; and as to the Works which he performed, he says it was the Father who dwelt in him that did those Works : ‡ I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works.

I am not conscious of this Doctrine, being destructive of the Peace of any Gospel Church, nor yet contrary to a Divine Revelation, since it is in it clearly revealed, and as it is reveal'd in the Sacred Pages, it cannot be destructive of any Soul's Comfort.

I know not upon what Ground you have acted, I am persuaded not from Scripture ; and am the more confirmed in my Opinion, because you have not produced one Scripture for it ; for out of the eight Texts that you have quoted, I cannot find either my Sentiment described as an Error, nor any Rule for your Conduct determined.

RICHARD SMART.

* John xiv. 9. † x. 30. ‡ xiv. 10.

P O S T.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE following Thoughts having occur'd to my Mind since my first Writing, I shall beg Leave to introduce them as a Supplement to the former; and I heartily wish that the Person who peruses these Papers would lay aside Prejudice and Superstition, renounce the Faith of others, and examine the Scriptures for himself, that so he may discover Truth in its native Purity, and unsullied by the false Glosses of Men. And I persuade myself every impartial and well dispos'd Mind, would soon see that the Basis on which he ought to build his Hopes for everlasting Happiness; is the Knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. That the Doctrine of the Trinity is not a Foundation Doctrine, may very easily be gather'd from the following Scriptures, as in *John* xiv. 1. Believe in God, believe also in me. *Rom.* x. 8, 9. This is the Word of Faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.

Act:

Acts viii. 37. And *Philip* said, If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. *The xviii.* 31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House. From hence we may see, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is no Foundation Doctrine, since Scripture neither requires nor proposes it as the Object of the Christian's Faith; and it is astonishing to me, that you, Sirs, who profess Scripture to be the Rule, by which your Conduct is to be determined; should exact more at the Hand of your Fellow Members as a Term of Communion, than God in his Word demands in the grand Affair of Salvation. To which let me add the Words of a pious and celebrated Author." It would be very pleasing indeed to walk onward through this "dark World, with some clear Notions of "what we ourselves are and shall be, as "well as of the Power that made us: But "our incurable Defects in this Sort of Science, "shall never seclude us from his Favour. "We may learn to know the only true God "so far as to adore and obey him, without "pronouncing concerning the Essence of the "great Unsearchable. We may know him "and love him as the original Father of all, "and his Son Jesus Christ whom he has sent. "This is Life eternal, and when we shall
" have

" have travelled over the Stage of
 " the Light and Influence of this
 " we shall forsake at once these
 " Mortality and Shadows; we shall
 " this dusky Region for a brighter
 " well Books, and Disputes, and
 " tions, and idle Hypotheses! We
 " into the State of unbodied Minds
 " are surrounded with the Light of
 " we shall see ourselves and our fellow
 " rits, there we shall commence our
 " by Immortality in those pure and ex
 " Delights of unerring Contemplation,
 " undecaying Love.

F I N I S.

(*Lately publish'd.*)

[Price Six-pence.]

Sold by *John Fuller*, at the *Bible and Dove*, in *Paternoster-Row*.

A New Essay with Relation to the Doctrine of the
 Trinity: Being an impartial Appeal to the Scriptures
 on that much controverted Subject, and more
 especially with Relation to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Being seriously recommended to the Perusal of every
 strict Trinitarian.

C

A

Y

By a
a
E
an

In a
Co
Cl

Some
ci
Pre
gre
Re
Err
of

Print